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An Early Indiana Educator

John B. Anderson

FOR nearly a quarter of a century, dating from 1840, John B. Anderson was a resident of New Albany, and for nearly twenty years he was principal of two famous classical schools—schools which had then not their equal in the Middle West, and which will always live in local history as not having been surpassed even in this present era of progressive education.

In 1840 Mr. John B. Anderson, a graduate of the historic Washington and Jefferson College, came from Washington, Pa., to Brandenburg, Ky. There he engaged in educational work and there also he was married to Miss Cecelia Geraldine Alexander. At New Albany in 1840, appeared Mr. Anderson, a man of impressive presence, unusual height and size, of fine character and rare scholarly attainments. He was accompanied by his wife, a woman possessing all the grace and culture of the representative Southern woman of that day, and an unmarried sister, Miss Nancy Anderson, also a woman of elegance and accomplishment. In this year was founded "Anderson's High School for Boys," designed as the catalogue stated, to be "a permanent English and classical school, in which young men might be prepared for the advanced classes in college, or for entering upon the business of life, professional or otherwise." An able body of professors was secured, a fine curriculum in English, Latin, Greek and mathematical studies established—Monsieur Picot in charge of "the French language and literature," and the school at once began to flourish. It drew patronage from many towns in Kentucky and Indiana, also from Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio, and even from far New York. In the prospectus issued by Mr. Anderson, New Albany was highly commended for its healthfulness, the general morality and industry of its inhabitants, and as a place offering fewer inducements to vice than most other towns in the country.

In compliance, no doubt, with "the general pecuniary embarrassment of the times," as mentioned in the prospectus,

the educational rates were surprisingly moderate; tuition and board, including fuel and lights, per quarter of eleven weeks, costing only \$31.25; French lessons, \$5 extra; vocal music, under Prof. S. W. Leonard, \$1 per quarter, and washing, per dozen, 38 cents. To this early school of the Anderson regime came, from Fort Smith, Ark., two boys named Hickory and Pinckney Rogers—known among their classmates as “Hickory” and “Pickory.” From Arkansas also came several Indian lads of the Chickasaw tribe: Zack Colbert, son of the chief of the Chickasaw nation, and two half-breeds, David and John Vann, one a blonde, the other a typical brown Indian, sons of Capt. John Vann, of the ill-fated Ohio River steamer, Lucy Walker. Among other Anderson school boys of this period were Gerard Alexander, of Kentucky, nephew of Mrs. Anderson, known to his classmates as “Ohio Piomingo Alexander,” and William H. Hillyer, afterwards a colonel and a member of Gen. U. S. Grant’s staff during the war. Further on in the chronicles are found other names now prominent in various ways: Charles W. Shields, professor at Princeton College; Hon. Jesse J. Brown, Hon. Alexander Dowling, of New Albany; Mr. Henry Crawford, of Chicago, and the name of Vinton Nunemacher—dead at twenty-three—who once won intellectual spurs among the “Old Seminary Boys,” of Indianapolis.

For the establishment of Anderson’s Female Seminary, in 1843, a large, old-fashioned, red brick mansion on the corner of the public square was chosen by Mr. Anderson, and a corps of eight instructors was secured, which was afterwards extended to thirteen. In 1850, 103 pupils were in attendance and in 1853, 132 names were registered in the catalogue. Of the quaint old residence in which this seminary flourished a word must be said. It once ranked as “the finest dwelling in New Albany,” but in 1895 was torn down, having degenerated into a troublesome and unprofitable tenement house. In the thirties, it was built by Mr. Erastus Benton, a wealthy Pittsburg man, interested in the New Albany iron factories. This pretentious house, with its great walls and gables, broad

porches and unusual architectural adornments, demanded an elegant interior. The handsome furnishings called for costly entertainments, and in a few years, the owner was disastrously involved in debt, the fine residence was sold and became rental property, locally registered as "Benton's Folly." Its large halls, commodious drawing room and parlors, airy galleries and unusual number of bed-rooms rendered it especially adapted to the needs of the female seminary, which occupied it for a long and flourishing term of years.

The girls' school was but a few minutes walk from the boys' school, and Mr. Anderson held both in careful superintendence. In addition to solid attainments the young women were taught French and German, with piano, guitar and harp lessons, vocal music, drawing and painting in oil and water. Plain and ornamental needle work were also taught. Girls held lower rank financially than boys in that epoch, as tuition was billed at \$75 per season, with washing 50 cents per dozen. Piano and guitar lessons were 25 cents each, while French and German lessons, and lessons in painting and drawing were 10 cents each; a lesson in oil coloring was rated at 15 cents, and vocal music at 2 cents per lesson. From North and South, East and West, came young women to this noted classical school for girls; many of the instructors were from New York State, and pupils were on the records from Oswego and Saratoga, from Mobile and New Orleans. Among the teachers, at one time, was Miss Caroline Cornelia Cooke, of New York, afterwards the wife of Indiana's Governor, Ashabel P. Willard. Mr. Willard, it is related, was assiduous in his attendance during leisure hours at Anderson's Seminary, and some of the young women who were pursuing the deep sciences and the elegant graces, did not fancy his physical peculiarities, his neck being notably longer than that of the average man. Girls will be girls, even with all the classics at their beck and call, and one staid matron now vividly recollects being reprimanded and incarcerated ignominiously for calling down the corridor to another girl, as Mr. Willard, on a prancing steed, drew rein at the pavement: "Look, look; there comes Neck."

"Regulations," in the Anderson schools, although described in the catalogue as "kind, though firm and decided," were really almost a minus quantity. Among other quaint features of the catalogue of 1850-51 is the name, on the list of instructors, of Miss Rhoda B. Byers, monitress. Certainly, the "power of presence" was never more strongly exemplified than in this instance, Mr. Anderson's amplitude of gracious authority, Mrs. Anderson's genial bearing and Miss Nancy's friendly stateliness operating in all cases as potent disarmament of unruliness and insubordination. Godliness, too, abode in the Anderson classical schools, pupils being required to attend worship, either in the churches of their choice, or with the family of the principal. Mr. Anderson came of a family of clergymen, his father, Rev. Dr. John Anderson, and his brother, Rev. Wm. C. Anderson, being prominent in the Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Kansas.

Among the attractive features of these old-time schools, the family atmosphere is described as having been unusual and most attractive. Out of harness Mr. Anderson was always a popular social center, the girls clustering about him with fearless and animated devotion. The New Albany pupils consisted of the flower of the town, and now, in all old New Albany families, eyes kindle and words of praise are spoken at the mere mention of the Anderson family. Several years ago, down in French town—Porr'entrury—I came upon an elderly Frenchman, a farmer and a wagon maker, whose dignity of bearing, choice language and general information impressed me as unusual, until the fact was elicited that he had been educated in John B. Anderson's school, walking to town, and paying for his tuition by serving as janitor boy. On his table was the New York Tribune, to which he told me he had been a subscriber since 1853.

In 1853 Mr. C. C. Hine and lady, of New York, became associated in the management of the seminary, and at this date more than fifty graduates, with twelve resident graduates, are noted in the catalogue as the fruits of the preceding scholastic years. Mr. and Mrs. Hine were notable additions to social New Albany, and the for-

mer afterwards became prominent in New York banking and insurance circles. Mrs. Hine was a woman of much culture and many accomplishments, and her presence gave additional zest to the care with which feminine deportment was molded in the Anderson Seminary. In those days membership in this classical institution was, in itself, passport to the upper intellectual and social life of the town; and, even at this day, can be set apart, as a class formed on old-school models of punctilious gentleness and courtesy, the New Albany men and women who enjoyed such privileges and example. A true "great heart" in many ways was John B. Anderson, and on the register of his good deeds is noted one most interesting incident. From Louisiana to these schools in far Indiana came a little group of two boys and a girl. For one year their tuition bills were promptly met, but after that appeared a financial vacuum. Mr. Anderson, however, kept the children in the school several years at his own expense, and it has never been known whether or not this outlay was made good to him by their derelict guardians. In 1850, 1851, 1852 and 1853 the Indiana girls in the Anderson schools, outside of New Albany were Eunice Meberd, Vincennes; Mary E. Hall, Princeton; Annie J. Vance, Corydon; Elizabeth and Cordelia Devin, Princeton; Nannie Fabrique, Pilot Knob; Eliza J. Foster, Evansville; Olivia Mitchell, Evansville; Arabella D. Wise, Vincennes; Sarah Ann Devin, Princeton; Sarah Devol, Terre Haute; Clarinda Mitchell, Evansville; Mary E. Rice, Corydon; M. J. O'Riley, Evansville; Ellen M. Brackenridge, Newburg; D. M. Dietz, Charlestown; Mary Hurd, Bedford; Nannie Johnston, Evansville; Glen J. McJunkin, Washington; Mary Miller, Bono; Emma Riley, Orleans, and Helen Von Trees, Washington. At the Chicago Beach Hotel this summer two ladies who had just met investigated an instinctive friendliness which they felt for each other and found the bond to be that they were both graduates of the Anderson Seminary at New Albany—one having been graduated in 1850, the other being probably the last graduate to whom the school had given a diploma. Owing to ill health in 1858, the master of the Anderson schools retired from collegiate labor and entered

upon a long and successful career as builder and manager of railroads. During the war Secretary Stanton recognized his fine grasp of affairs, his cool judgment and remarkable executive ability, and pressed him to accept a position as brigadier general. This honor was declined, but he did accept an appointment as general manager of the United States military railways, serving faithfully and retiring at his own request in 1864. Mr. Anderson was a wonderful reader and book lover, and at the time of his golden wedding assisted in founding at the College of Emporia, Kan., an Anderson memorial library, instead of accepting for himself and wife the usual gifts which such celebrations evoke. Mrs. Anderson survives him. No children were ever born to this couple, whose domestic relations were otherwise ideal, but in the remembrance of many school children and school children's children shall their lives and works be perpetuated.

EMMA CARLETON

NOTE.—For further information about John B. Anderson by the same writer, see *The Book-Lover Magazine*, July-August, 1903. In this sketch Mrs. Carleton credits Anderson with having directly inspired the munificent library gifts of Andrew Carnegie.

Origin of the Word Hoosier

[The many and varied accounts of the origin of the term "Hoosier" mostly have in common one thing—improbability. These stories are too well known to give space to here and may be found elsewhere—for instance in Meredith Nicholson's "The Hoosiers." So far as we know Jacob P. Dunn is the only one who has made anything like a thorough study of the question, and because his conclusions seem to us the most reasonable theory in the field, and, in addition, are but little known, we think they will be of interest here. The following article is the second of two that appeared in the *Indianapolis News* (see Aug. 23 and 30, 1902), and contains the substance of Mr. Dunn's argument, the first being, mainly, a discussion of the current stories. The entire study in a revised form will probably be published before very long in the collections of the Indiana Historical Society.]

In 1854 Amelia M. Murray visited Indianapolis, and was for a time the guest of Governor Wright. In her book, entitled "Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada" (page 324), she says: "Madame Pfeiffer (she evidently meant Mrs. Puslzky, for Madame Pfeiffer did not come here and